

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

October 9, 2019

The Honorable Jim Hubbard  
Undersecretary for Natural Resources and Environment  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1200 Independence Avenue, NW (North Building)  
Room 218E  
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Undersecretary Hubbard:

We are writing to express our support for using BAER and/or non-BAER funds to support Coconino County's flood mitigation efforts on Forest Service lands affected by the Museum Fire.

As you may know, the Museum Fire burned nearly 2,000 acres and came within two miles of Flagstaff, Coconino County's largest city. While much of this area was thinned due to the city bond-funded Flagstaff Watershed Protection Project (FWPP), some of the most intense fire burned within the Spruce Avenue watershed. Our experience with the 2010 Schultz Fire and flooding tells us that we can expect flood threats for the next several years. We experienced a weak monsoon season this year with minimal flooding results. However, we fear the effects that winter moisture and next year's monsoon season will have if we do not conduct certain mitigation measures now. As you may recall, the Schultz fire burned east of Flagstaff and the flooding after the fire resulted in the death of a 12-year old girl.

To date, Coconino County, in partnership with Flagstaff and the Forest Service, has spent nearly \$2 million on fire and flood mitigation efforts (while Forest Service has estimated that it spent upwards of \$12 million on fire fighting efforts). These efforts include jersey barriers, sandbags, and other post-fire mitigation activities.

While the collaborative effort between Coconino County and Forest Service has been outstanding, we are concerned that, without funding to complete flood mitigation in the burn areas watershed, Coconino County and Flagstaff could see unprecedented flooding, more costly destruction of Forest Service, City and County assets, and worse, the potential loss of life. The Museum Fire was catastrophic; flooding, as a result of the fire, could be far more costly and consequential.

For these reasons, we ask that Forest Service consider using use BAER – or non-BAER – funds to mitigate the flood risk on Forest Service lands. These funds would be used to slow the flow of water by building a structure to create an alluvial fan thus resulting in less damaging flooding

and keeping soil and sediment in the forest where it is needed. It is estimated that flows from the watershed could be up to 100 times greater than pre-fire conditions.

Thanks in advance for your attention to this matter, and please accept our best regards.

Sincerely,



Martha McSally  
U.S. Senator



Kyrsten Sinema  
U.S. Senator



Tom O'Halleran  
Member of Congress



Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.  
Member of Congress

cc: Vicky Christiansen, Chief, U.S. Forest Service